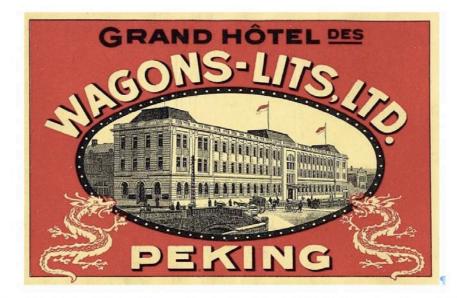
### Brief history of the Rotary Club of Beijing Compiled by Rtn Gilbert – February 2024

Sources: many documents and reports, many from Rtn Hermann G. Heid and Rtn Herbert K. Lau.

#### The Thursday Tiffin Club: the early days

The earliest record on the topic Rotary Club Peking dates back to 18 November 1920 when John M. Phillips, Secretary of Boston Rotary Club, wrote to the Secretary of the International Association of Rotary Clubs, the forerunner of Rotary International, Chesley R. Perry, reporting on a meeting he had had with the Rev. Dr. H.S. Vincent. Vincent had spent fifteen or sixteen years in Siam where he had heard about Rotary. He was to be transferred to Pekin University to teach Vocational Education. Vincent was keen to establish a Club in Pekin.



Grand Hotel des Wagons-Lits was the first five star hotel in Beijing when it opened in 1905. It was operated by the Belgian company Wagon-Lits that also managed the luxury cars of the Transiberian Railway.¶

The first meeting leading towards the establishment of the Rotary Club Peking took place over tea on 18 January 1923 when fifteen Americans and one Chinese met in the Wagon-Lits Hotel in Peking.

On 18 June 1923 Julean Arnold (Commercial Attaché of the American Legation in Peking) assembled a committee of five key men to his home to discuss the requirements of RI and the idea of bringing 25 Charter Members together.

This committee invited twenty-five potential charter members to a luncheon in Arnold's home on 11 July during which the project, obligations and essential features of a Rotary Club Peking were explained, see below the minutes of meeting. On 13 July the Committee met again and selected the temporary name *The Thursday Tiffin Club*.

Among the Chinese names mentioned was that of Dr. C.T. Wang, who was to become the first District Governor in China. He was a former active member of the Shanghai Rotary Club, later became vice-minister of Commerce and Industry of China, among other appointments. The first meeting of the Club took place on 27 July 1923; 28 members with 50% Chinese and 50% foreigners.

## WHO'S WHO IN CHINA

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C.T. Wang

most up-to date institution of high learning in China. After his graduation, Mr. Wang taught in various schools for a while, and then went to Japan as a Y.M.C.A. secretary, doing much good work among Chinese students studying in that country.

In July of 1907, Mr. Wang went to America as a selfsupporting student. During his first year in the United States, he studied liberal arts at the University of Michigan. From 1908 to 1911 Mr. Wang attended Yale University. In 1910 he received the degree of B. A. Upon his return to Chinas in 1911, Mr. Wang was appointed secretary of the Chinese Y.M.C.A. at Shanghai. Soon afterwards the first revolution which resulted in the establishment of the present Republic broke out, and Mr. Wang actively identified himself with the revolutionary leaders. He worked for a time under General Li Yuan-hung, former President of China, who was then a powerful revolutionary commander. During the peace negotiations, Mr. Wang acted as General Li's representative and participated in important discussions held at Shanghai.

After the abdication of the Manchu Emperor and the organization of a provisional republican government, Mr. Wang was elected a member of the Provisional Legislature which sat at Nanking, the center of the revolutionary administration. In 1912 Mr. Wang went to Peking when the national government was transferred thither and Dr. Sun Yat-sen resigned the Presidency in favor of Yuan Shih-kai. He was at once appointed Vice-Minister of Commerce and Industry. Later he was ordered by a Mandate to act for the Minister, who resigned.

When the first Parliament met in 1913, Mr. Wang was elected Vice-Speaker of the Senate, which was then practically in control of the Kuomingtang or the People's Party. He is a member of that party. After six months' sitting, the Parliament was dissolved by the late President Yuan Shihkai. With its dissolution, Mr. Wang retired into private life and was afterwards invited by the Shanghai Y. M. C. A. to rejoin its services. He was appointed Secretary of the National Committee of the Y. M. C. A., and in that capacity did much for that institution.

After the death of Yuan Shih-kai in 1916, the old Parliament was recalled, and Mr. Wang resumed his office as Vice-Speaker of the Senate. He remained in this position until the Parliament was again dissolved in 1917, this time by former President Li Yuan-hung, upon whom pressure was brought to bear for signing the Mandate dissolving the legislature. Mr. Wang then went to Shanghai and joined the anti-government forces. When the twice-dissolved Parliament first met at Canton, the center of opposition, he was present.

As Mr. Wang is popular in America and is an eloquent speaker, the Southern government dispatched him in 1918 to Washington to represent its case before President Wilson and secure American recognition of its belligerency. During his mission he was requested by Peking to attend the Peace Conference the request was complied with for national interests.

Upon his return to China, he took on interest in Business He is now Vice-President of an import and export company at Shanghai. Meeting at home of Mr. Julean Arnold called to discuss the formation of a chapter of the Rotary Club in Peking.

July 11; 1923

#### Minutes

Mr. Julean Arnold took the chair, and explained the constitution and purpose of a Rotary Club, briefly sketching the history of the movement to date. He urged the application for a charter by Peking, members to be of all nationalities with the hope that approximately 50% of the membership should be Chinese.

Later Mr. Arnold called on Dr. C. T. Wang who touched briefly on the activities and character of the Rotary Club of Shanghai.

The meeting was then thrown open for discussion.

The following resolutions were formally moved, seconded and passed:

- RESOLVED that a committee of five members be appointed by the chair to designate the offices of the local society, and suggest at the next meeting the names of members who might fill these posts. The chair appointed Dr. C. T. Wang, Mr. H. C. Faxon, Admiral Tsai Ting-kan, Mr. C. R. Bennett, Mr. S. F. Howard.
- RESOLVED that meetings be held every other Thursday from 12.30 to 2 p.m. beginning July 26, 1923
- RESOLVED that the above appointed committee be requested to arrange the next place of meeting.
- RESOLVED that the initiation fee for membership in this society be \$25 local currency.

RESOLVED that each individual present at this meeting be requested to hand in to Mr. S. F. Howard of the American Express Company his decision in writing as to his wish concerning inclusion in the charter membership of this society. It was also suggested that initiation fees might be sent to Mr. Howard at this time.

The meeting concluded with a photograph of the 24 men present at the dinner and meeting.

L. C. Goodrich thed Coccept Seen Seen

Minutes of meeting 11 July 1923

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The initial member list 1923

RI rejected the initial charter application in 1923 because there were too many same or similar classifications in the fields of missionaries, doctors and educators. Not only that, RI objected to the fact that too many of the proposed charter members resided at the same address. But it was quite normal in those early days that foreigners lived in concession areas allocated to specific nationalities.

On 24 April 1924 the Thursday Tiffin Club disbanded. A committee of three was appointed to select 15 possible charter members – in strict compliance with Rotary requirements. Julean Arnold was appointed Special Representative of the Board of RI to oversee the formation of the Rotary Club of Peking.

#### The Rotary Club of Peking is chartered and later changed to The Rotary Club of Peiping

On 11 July 1924 Admiral Tsai Ting Kan, who had been elected President of the newly organized club, sends the charter application to the Secretary General.

The *Rotary Club of Peking* with 22 charter member was finally admitted by Rotary International on 30 August 1924 with Admiral Tsai Ting Kan serving as its Charter President and Julean Arnold as Director. The Rotary Club of Peking became the third club in China, with clubs having already been established in Shanghai in 1919 and Tianjin in 1923.

On 2 September 1924, Julean Arnold, the Commercial Attaché` of the American Legation in Peking, received a telegram from "Ches" R. Perry, General Secretary of Rotary International. The telegram read PEKING CLUB ELECTED MEMBER ROTARY INTERNATIONAL AUGUST 30TH NUMBER 1814 HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS

# 史上第一位華籍扶輪社社長 - 蔡廷幹海軍上將

Admiral Tsai Ting-Kan

The First Chinese Rotary Club President in History

By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

1 July 2014



Admiral Tsai Ting-Kan 蔡廷幹海軍上將

## The First Chinese Rotary Club President in History

After the establishment of Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) in 1919, followed by Tientsin Rotary Club (天津扶輪社) in 1923, a group of outstanding persons in Peking (Beijing) gathered together on Thursday, 27 July 1923, and to discuss the formation of the third Rotary club in Peking, the Republican China's capital. Initially, around 30 persons joined in a regular luncheon fellowship called [The Thursday Tiffin Club]. Until 30 June 1924, finally 22 persons dedicated to join the world service organization of Rotary, and submitted the membership application of Peking Rotary Club (北京扶輪社) to Rotary International. On 30 August 1924, Rotary International approved the membership with the Charter No. 1814 granted. Amongst these 22 charter members, there were 8 Chinese, 11 Americans, 2 Britons and 1 Australian. The charter president was a Chinese -- Admiral Tsai Ting-Kan (蔡廷幹海軍上將) (Classification: Customs Administration), Director General of Customs Revenue Council, Beivang Government Administration. Though both of the Shanghai and Tientsin Rotary clubs were formed earlier but they did not have any Chinese served Club President before August 1924. Hence, Admiral Tsai Ting-Kan became "The first Chinese in history to serve as a Rotary Club President". There was his brief introduction published in *《The Rotarian》* Magazine, Issue January 1927, Page 15: "Rotarians in the Public Eye".

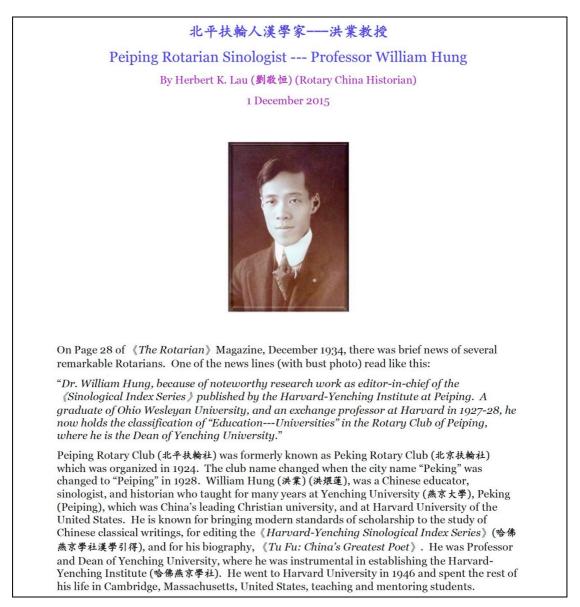
Admiral Tsai Ting-Kan

The Club met every 1st and 3rd Thursday at 12:45 p.m. at the Masonic Temple.

Back in 1920's, Peking was part of Chihli Province with a population of 950,000, of which 3,000 were foreigners. The Club initially met at the Masonic Temple.



In July 1929 the club changed its name to *Rotary Club of Peiping* after the Chinese Legation in Washington confirmed to RI that "THE PRESENT CORRECT SPELLING IS PEIPING".



As a delegate from the Republic of China William Hung attended the 21st Rotary International Convention. He spoke also in front of the congregation during the "International Business Practice Conference" Wednesday afternoon, 25 June 1930, at the Stevens Hotels, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., presided by I. B. Tom Sutton, of Tampico, Mexico, Rotary International President 1928-1929



Little is known as to what the Club did in terms of Community Service work but there is correspondence with RI regarding Flood relief and on Christmas Eve in 1924 the club invited 200 very poor boys for dinner. It turned out that 50 of the boys were so poor that they had not enough clothes to venture through the cold weather to come to the dinner. When the members heard of this they arranged through the Salvation Army that adequate clothing was provided.



Wagon-Lits Hotel

The Club ceased to function on 8 December 1941 when the Wagon-Lits Hotel, which served as the club's headquarter, was taken over by the Japanese for their own use for many years. Many foreigners were interned and the Chinese members found it unwise to hold meetings elsewhere.

#### Rotary Club of Peiping reborn and becomes Rotary Club of Peking

The club was revived on 30 August 1945 when 17 of the previous 44 members and 12 visiting Rotarians – most of whom from various internment camps – attended the meeting. But due to the cost of lunch, which many members could not afford, it was decided to hold only one meeting per month and offer Chinese luncheons. In fact the General Manager of the hotel permitted members to bring their own lunchbox.

Rotary International re-admitted the *Rotary Club of Peiping* with thirty charter members on 14 August 1946, giving it the old Club No. 1814. Dr. C.T. Wang had become the first District Governor over Districts 96-97-98. The Club met fortnightly at 5 p.m. at the Wagons-Lits Hotel. One year later the club had increased its membership to over 50 and it contributed CN\$1,000,000 to various Salvation Army Charities. A resolution was passed to support the City Cleaning Campaign, which was launched by the Municipal Government of Peiping. Another noteworthy development in 1947 was the invitation of a woman as the first lady speaker at a luncheon.

The membership at the end of Rotary Year 1946/47 had risen to 58 with the largest contingent being Chinese (28) followed by Americans and British. Germans, Italians and Japanese were not admitted pending the signing of Peace Treaties between China and these countries.

On 18 July 1950, acting on the recommendation of the Secretary of the RC Peiping, RI approves once again the change of the name. This time to *Rotary Club of Peking*. This in view of the fact that the city was now the capital of China.

On 26 June 1951 RI terminated the membership of the RC Peking and declared the Charter null and void.

#### A difficult restart in 1996

In 1995 Rtn Hermann G. Heid, member of RC Hong Kong assumed a position as Chief Representative of a German industrial company in Beijing.

After one year of research and preparation, Heid approached seven expatriates interested in Rotary. These eight, of which Heid was the only Rotarian, met for their first luncheon on the first Tuesday of June 1996 (4 June) in the boardroom of the China World Hotel. They decided to continue to meet weekly and to conduct all meetings the same way as Rotary clubs do. Tuesday was selected because Heid's club, RC Hong Kong met on the same day at the same time. Shortly afterwards, RC Hong Kong elected Heid VP of their club, a position he held until 1999.

Over time the Beijing group used different names. *Beijing Fellowship Group* and *Fellowship Group* of the RC Hong Kong were just some of them.

They created a banner. Admittedly, this banner was somewhat provocative and it was borderline Rotary-legal. It had upset some but brought smiles of admiration to most. It said *"Rotary Club of Beijing"* proceeded in small print: *"Striving to be"*.

In June 1998 Beijing-based Rotarians celebrated their 2nd anniversary which fell together with their 100th meeting. The evening meeting was highlighted when Rtn Bob Wilson of RC Hong Kong South presented to the group the original bell of the Rotary Club of Peking which had been donated to the club in August 1925 by Rtn S.F. Howard. Since then the original bell has rung at every weekly meeting.

#### 'The Rotary Bell' A Symbol of the Rotary Club of Beijing after th

The Rotary Club of Beijing calls its meetings to order with an old brass bell that was donated to the original Beijing club in 1925 by HK Rotarian Stanley F. Howard



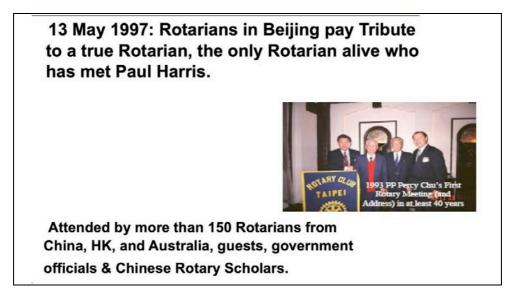
• The Rotary Bell disappeared after the establishment of People Republic of China in 1949

 Discovered in a Hong Kong antique shop in 1992 by Hong Kong Rotarian Bob Wilson

 In June 1998, Bob Wilson donated it to the Beijing Rotary Fellowship Group in honor of its 100th meeting



In May 1997 the Club invited Percy Chu, President of the RC Shanghai in 1934-35, to Beijing to celebrate his 100th birthday in the midst of Rotarians. Those who attended that evening's fellowship meeting – again numerous government officials and Deng Ling, the oldest daughter of Deng Xiao Ping, joined in the celebrations – will never forget the greatness which radiated from this remarkable man. Percy was awarded two PHF from the Rotary Clubs of Hong Kong and Perth, Western Australia, Australia.



Through smart creativity, dedicated and hard work the Beijing Rotarians had raised nearly US\$ 1,000,000 in the first nine years since 1996. All funds generated were plowed into many worthwhile projects throughout China.

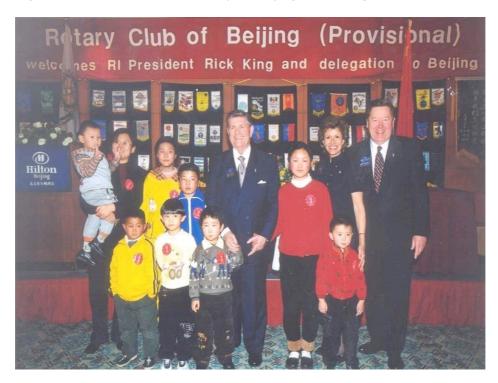
When China was struck by devastating floods in 1998 the Beijing group showed once again true Rotary spirit! The group joined in the Disaster Relief efforts of Rotary District 3450 which planned the construction of a "Rotary International Village" to house 150 families with about six hundred members who all had lost their homes to the floods. Beijing Rotarian Arthur Mattli and famous Chinese soloist composed and recorded music - for the first time ever the western piano and the ancient Chinese pipa are heard on the same recording – for a compact disc entitled "Village in the Floods".

During the first few years RI was quite apprehensive about the existence and activities of the Fellowship Group that acted and worked like a Rotary club and had Rotarians as member, yet it was not a club. For many years some past and current District leaders either ignored or outright obstructed the attempts of the Beijing Rotarians to be recognized by RI. But Group retained the unwavering support of RC Hong Kong.

In 1999 Ambassador Chris Bramsen, not only being a diplomat but also a lawyer, helped Hermann Heid to write what was called a "White Paper" with arguments for RI to allow Rotary clubs in China. We have it on file.

### **Provisional Rotary Club Beijing**

Ultimately, the support and the tenacity of the Beijing Rotarians finally reaped some fruit! In November 2000 three RI presidents – Frank Develyn, Rick King and Bhichai Rattakul – along with RI General Secretary, Ed Futa, and several RI Directors visited Beijing by invitation of the Chinese Government and met with both government representatives and the Beijing Fellowship Group. Their visit resulted into the decision to place the item "*Provisional Rotary Club Beijing*" on the agenda of the June 2001 RI Board meeting. By unanimous decision the RI board passed the motion to grant provisional status not only to Beijing but Shanghai as well, on 16 June 2001.



At their board meeting early February 2003 the RI board approved a change in their policy for the chartering of the two China clubs. While the previous requirements for chartering was "the approval and invitation by the Chinese government and the approval by the board of RI" the new wording is "the approval and invitation by the Chinese government and / or the board of RI".

The Rotary Club of Beijing (Provisional) on 31 March 2005 had 53 members and 7 honorary members. President: Mosud Mannan - President Elect: Carl-Ludwig Dörwald

### RCB is back! Rotary Club of Beijing - District 0052 - Club Number: 60724

On 8 February 2006 The *Rotary Club of Beijing* was formally chartered by RI, signed by RI President Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar. In that Charter year the Club had 57 members from about 16 different countries. The board:

Carl-Ludwig Doerwald, PHF - Charter President 2005-2006 First Vice President Wolfgang Bockhold Second Vice President Mike Ma Club Secretary David van Meerendonk Sergeant at Arms Vlad Reyes Treasurer Thomas Buschmann President Elect Michael Furst Chairpersons of Community Service Stefan Hoffmann-Kuhnt, Vocational Service Alan Babington-Smith, Gift of Life Ruby Chang and International Service Gloria Wong



President Carl-Ludwig Dörwald with Rtn Hermann Heid at the Charter Lunch



21 May 2006 - Group picture, Charter Lunch



21 May 2006 - President Carl-Ludwig Dörwald with RI President Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar at the Charter Lunch



Rotary Gala Evening 21 May 2006

On Sunday 21 May 2006 the Charter Presentation Lunch at the China Club was attended by the RI President Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar, half of the Board of RI and more than 150 Visiting Rotarians, with a total of over 200 guests.

Later that day the Rotary Gala Evening was held at the Kempinski Hotel with more than 600 guests, including RI President Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar, half of RI Board and more than 150 Visiting Rotarians. RI President Carl-Wilhelm visited China from 20 to 23 May 2006.



The new charter dated 3 April 2014

RCB received the new charter on 3 April 2014 referring to the original charter date of 30 August 1924.

#### RCB in the years 2000-2010

One of the major projects done by the club was the Gift of Life, operations for children with congenital heart disease. In the early years the children would fly to the USA for the operation. Later they were done in China. Some pictures from 2004,





The surgery and after the surgery



Gift of Life project in China (from 2000) with the co-operation with Great Neck Club and District 7250

sent 25 children to USA for heart surgeries.
cumulative 145 surgeries in China will be completed by June 2005.





Sarah Randt and a GOL baby, President Mosud Mannan and Rtn Ruby Chang



Official induction of Gilbert with President Elect Carl-Ludwig Dörwald, President Mosud Mannan and Joerg Wuttke on 11 January 2005



24 February 2005 - 100 Years of Rotary – An International Evening in Hilton Hotel with president Mosud Mannan



- Rotary Club of Great Neck (NY USA)
- Rotary Club of Del Mar (California USA)
- Rotary Club of Rabat
- The Capital Club Network (Washington DC USA)

In 2009 the club had many sister clubs from around the world

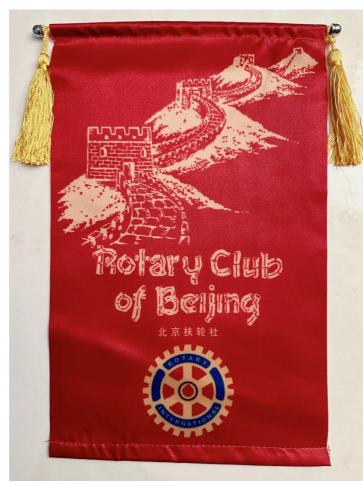


One of the many great balls (2009)

Some of our banners over the years.







Our banner as of today (2024)